

Sunday Demo - morning
9:00 - 12:00

TURNING A BOWL/PLATTER

Janice Levi

Chucking the blank:

1. Wood worm screw (hard for me to remove)
2. Faceplate (a favorite of "old timers")
3. Scroll chuck (my favorite)

Chucking process:

4. Measure your scroll chuck jaws when almost closed. The size of the tenon should require that the jaws be almost closed. Larger bowls require larger chucks/jaws.
5. If using a wood worm screw, wax the screw for easier removal.
6. Examine the wood blank. The best figuring is usually in the bottom of the bowl/platter. If you plan to create a rim that will be dyed, the best figuring will appear on the top of the bowl/platter.
7. Friction-hold the rounded blank against the scroll chuck. Bring up tailstock. Turn expansion tenon on what will become the top side of the bowl.
8. True the area where the expansion recess will be. (draw cut/pull cut)
9. Use a captive ring tool to create the dovetail recess.
10. Remove the blank, turn it around and mount in chuck.
11. Turn the second expansion recess in what will become the bottom of the bowl.

Turning process:

12. Define the foot location—use a parting tool, spindle gouge, bowl gouge, beading tool, bedan (that's right, just about anything you have will probably work)
 - a. The expansion recess will be slightly deeper than the bowl outside the foot.

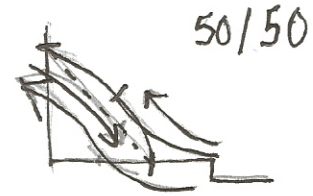


13. Begin shaping the underside of the bowl/platter

- a. Tools that might be used—bowl gouges of various sizes, carbide-tipped tools, scrapers
- b. Generally, remove wood from the center toward the exterior of the bowl/platter with a variety of cuts
 - i. Push cut, pull cut, back cut, shear cut
 - ii. A shear cut for the final cut works well to remove tearout
- c. Design/shape—The shape of the bowl/platter will vary greatly depending on size of blank, expected use of the finished product, quality of the wood, possibility of additional enhancements. Some common shapes are:
 - i. Traditional open curve



ii. Ogee (50/50 shape)



iii. Hollow form



- d. Endgrain vs. crossgrain—An endgrain bowl accentuates the growth rings. It can be turned using the same tools and techniques used in turning a crossgrain bowl. The crossgrain bowl/platter is stronger and a better choice if the piece is to be used functionally.

14. Applying finish—some prefer to sand and apply finish to the bottom of the bowl now.

- Apply a sealer (75% Deft lacquer and 25% denatured alcohol)
- Oil and wax finish

15. With the bottom well defined, flip the piece and mount it in the expansion recess on the bottom. Ready to begin hollowing the inside using the same assortment of tools mentioned in #10-a.

16. Two approaches to hollowing—

- With small bowls (up to about 8", it is safe to start at the center and work toward the outside rim.
- With larger bowls, it is safer to start near the outside rim and leave mass in the center.
 - To reduce the risk of the tool skating backward, use a parting tool at the very outside and plunge in at a slight angle to create a little shoulder. The bowl gouge can then engage the cut safely.
 - When approaching the center, slow down to remove the nub at the center.

17. Bowls/platters with decorative rim:

- Curve the rim; a straight rim is not aesthetically pleasing.
- If dyeing the rim, turn the rim slightly larger than the finished rim will be.
- Do not try to turn the outer edge. Sand it to shape.

18. Tools

- The swept back grind bowl gouge works well for most of the bowl.
- A blunter grind may work better as a finishing cut from the lower edge across the bottom.
- A scraper with a light cut also works well for the finishing cut.

19. Sand and apply finish on the inside of the bowl/platter.

TIPS:

1. When making a cut, look at the profile, not the tool
2. Push cut—Cut with the front tip and bevel
3. Draw cut—Cut with the wing of the gouge and the bevel
4. Shear cut—Close flute, lower handle (and tool rest) and cut with lower wing
5. When truing the outer surface, use a squeeze cut at the outer edge to create a little shoulder for the next cut. This helps prevent the tool from skating backwards.
6. E-Z Tools—These are scrapers and very expensive. They cannot be used to roll beads. In the long run, it might be better (and less expensive) to purchase cutting tools and learn to use them properly. However, the means to the end does count here for each individual turner.
7. When applying sealer, hand apply to the endgrain sides first, then to the entire surface. If you plan to dye the rim on top, it is essential to seal the wood on the bottom side to prevent dye from leaking through.
8. If applying dye, which will raise the grain, spray the wood with alcohol first, then sand it to 320 or 400.
9. Make sure the tool rest is adjusted properly. If working on the outside end of the rest, vibration can occur. Center the rest where the greatest stress will occur.
10. Lower the tool rest to make a good shear cut.

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11. Sanding:
 - a. Wet sand dry wood with mineral spirits
 - b. Wet sand wet/green wood with water
12. Buffing:
 - a. Buff the inside of the bowl with drill-mounted bowl buff and the lathe turning
 - b. Buff the foot off the lathe on a buffing wheel
13. Making repairs:
 - a. Thin cracks—apply oil to area, wipe excess, apply thin CA, sand until sanding dust fills the cracks. May have to repeat several times.
 - b. Thick cracks—apply oil, wipe excess, add filler (wood dust, coffee grounds, etc.) thin CA. May have to remove with cutting tool
 - c. Large defects—Epoxy can be dyed or have wood dust added. Use painter's tape under the opening. Gel epoxies are effective but pricey.